

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 FAA-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /037 W
----- 109985

R 150925Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4443
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUDAPEST 3342

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, LE, HU
SUBJ: HUNGARIAN AIRLINES (MALEV) CRASH

REF: BEIRUT 12666; STATE 241463

1. BUDAPEST BUZZES WITH VARIETY OF REPORTS ON PROBABLE CAUSE OF MALEV CRASH. EMBOFFS HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT BOMB WAS ON BOARD AND THAT PLANE WAS "SHOT DOWN." FERIHEGY AIRPORT CHIEF (TOMASHOWSKI) TOLD BRITISH MILATT THAT BEIRUT AIRPORT TAPES "INOPERABLE." MALEV CHIEF STEWARDESS CONFIDED TO THIS EMBASSY'S AIR ATTACHE THAT MALEV EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN TOLD NOT TO DISCUSS ACCIDENT.

2. EMPLOYEE OF FOREIGN, NON-HUNGARIAN AIRLINE HAS TOLD US THAT PLANE BELONGED TO AEROFLOT AND WAS REPLACEMENT FOR MALEV AIRCRAFT UNDERGOING REPAIRS IN USSR. MALEV AIRLINER THAT CRASHED, ACCORDING THIS ACCOUNT, HAD ACTUALLY SAT IN CAIRO FOR SOME PERIOD AWAITING SALE TO EGYPTIANS. THEN IT WAS FLOWN BACK TO USSR FOR REHAB AND SUBSTITUTED FOR MALEV AIRCRAFT WHILE LATTER WAS BEING REPAIRED.

3. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY UNABLE OBTAIN PASSENGER LIST FOR ILL-FATED FLIGHT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD RELIABLY THAT, BESIDES CREW, THERE WAS ONLY ONE OTHER HUNGARIAN NATIONAL ABOARD AND THAT AMONG PASSENGERS WERE NUMEROUS PLO MEMBERS

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RETURNING TO LEBANON AFTER OPENING CEREMONIES FOR PLO

OFFICE HERE (BUDAPEST 3201).

4. EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHOUT
SUCCESS OBTAIN TAIL NUMBB OF ILL-FATED MALEV TU-154.
WE SHALL CONTINUE TO TRY.

5. COMMENT: HUNGARIAN SENSITIVITY TO LOSS OF AIRCRAFT MAY
WELL STEM FROM ONE OR ALL OF FOLLOWING: A) MALEV HAS NOW
LOST SIX AIRCRAFT IN LITTLE OVER TWO YEARS; B) AIRCRAFT
BELONGED TO SOVIETS AND PRESUMABLY WILL HAVE TO BE REPLACED;
AND C) HUNGARIANS ARE EDGY OVER PLO IMPLICATIONS, PARTICULARLY
IF THEY SUSPECT THAT THERE ACTUALLY WAS EXPLOSION PRIOR TO
CRASH INTO SEA.

MCAULIFFE

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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